

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 GAC-01 ACDA-19 AID-20 OMB-01 EB-11 RSR-01

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0722

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CINCPACREP CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2065

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, SN, AS

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN NOTE ON FPDA

REF: STATE 063365

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFF IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS APRIL 9 WITH DFA OFFICIALS WERE TOLD THAT GOA HAS NOT PRESENTED NOTE TO PARTNERS IN ANZUK REGARDING TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF AUSTRALIAN FORCES FROM BOTH MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE IN 1975/76. DFA OFFICIALS STATED, HOWEVER, THAT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT FUTURE AUSTRALIAN ROLE IN ORGANIZATION WOULD TAKE PLACE OVER NEXT FEW MONTHS DURING PROPOSED VISITS OF DEFMIN BARNARD TO PARTNER CAPITALS. OFFICIALS CONFIRMED WITHDRAWAL OF BATTALION AND BATTERY AT END OF 1973 AS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED AND ADDED THAT 180 MEN WHO COULD BE CONSIDERED TO BE ATTACHED TO THE BATTALION WOULD ALSO BE WITHDRAWN AT THAT TIME. THEY ALSO CONFIRMED AUSTRALIAN INTENTION TO MOVE 121 ST SIGNALS UNIT FROM SINGAPORE " AS SOON AS POSSIBLE". END SUMMARY. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT INFORM EMBASSY WHETHER WE MAY
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INFORM GOA THAT INFORMATION ABOUT AUSTRALIAN FORCE REDUCTION IN ANZUK WAS GIVEN BY SINGAPORE PRESIDENT LEE KUAN YEW.

2. DURING CALL ON DFA FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY (DEFENCE) BLAKENEY APRIL 9, AMBASSADOR ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION OF PRESENT POSITION OF GOA ON WITHDRAWAL OF ITS FORCES FROM SINGAPORE. BLAKENEY SAID THAT AT " ABOUT TURN OF THE YEAR" BATTERY AND BATTALION WOULD BE WITHDRAWN. IT WAS ALSO DECIDED THAT MONITORING FACILITY AND PERSONNEL CONCERNED WITH IT WOULD BE WITHDRAWN WHEN IT WAS POSSIBLE TO RELOCATE THEM IN AUSTRALIA BUT THAT THIS DATE WAS NOT YET FIXED. FINALLY HE SAID THAT WITHDRAWAL OF ANY TROOPS NOT IN FOREGOING CATEGORIES WAS MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION WITHIN GOA AND THAT NO DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH FPDA PARTNERS; USG WOULD BE INFORMED.

3. IN SEPARATE CALL ON CAMPBELL (ASSISTANT SECRETARY - DEFENSE) IN DFA, HE ADDED FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO FOREGOING. IN ADDITION TO WITHDRAWAL OF BATTALION AND BATTERY, ABOUT 180 MEN WHO COULD BE CONSIDERED TO BE PART OF THE BATTALION SINCE THEY ARE DIRECTLY ATTACHED TO IT FOR LOGISTIC PURPOSES, ARE ALSO TO BE WITHDRAWN AT THE END OF 1973. CAMPBELL SAID THIS WOULD LEAVE SOMETHING IN THE VICINITY OF 600 SUPPORT TROOPS BUT HE WOULD NOT LIKE TO BE HELD TO THAT FIGURE. HE NOTED IN PASSING THAT BOTH MR. BARNARD AND MR. WHITLAM HAD BEEN " BOXED IN" BY THE FIGURE OF 600 WHICH THEY HAD USED ABOUT SIX WEEKS AGO IN REFERRING TO THE RESIDUAL AUSTRALIAN FORCES IN SINGAPORE AFTER WITHDRAWAL OF THE BATTALION AND BATTERY. CAMPBELL SAID BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND DEPUTY PM HAD BEEN ASKED NOT TO USE SPECIFIC NUMBERS IN REFERRING TO THIS FORCE SO AS TO PROVIDE THE NEEDED FLEXIBILITY IN MAKING FURTHER ARRANGEMENTS.

4. CAMPBELL ALSO STATED THAT THE INFORMATION WHICH THE DEPARTMENT HAS THAT THE GOA HAS DELIVERED A NOTE REGARDING AUSTRALIAN PLANS FOR FULL WITHDRAWAL IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE. THERE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE OTHER PARTNERS AND IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT ALL AUSTRALIAN TROOPS WILL BE WITHDRAWN BY THE END OF 1975. CAMPBELL SEEMED SURPRISED THAT THE SUPPOSED " NOTE" APPEARED TO BE SO SPECIFIC WITH REGARD TO WITHDRAWAL TIMES, I. E. 1975 FOR FORCES IN SINGAPORE AND APRIL 1976 FOR FORCES IN MALAYSIA. HE SAID AUSTRALIANS ARE PREPARED TO DISCUSS MATTERS FURTHER DURING PROPOSED VISIT OF BARNARD TO SINGAPORE, PERHAPS AS EARLY AS JUNE, AND IN A VISIT TO LONDON AFTER THAT. CAMPBELL STRESSED THAT THE DATES FOR BARNARD' S VISIT WERE NOT FIRM BUT THAT BARNARD PROPOSED TO VISIT NEW ZEALAND
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OVER THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 14.

5. WITH REGARD TO THE RAAF SUQADRON AT BUTTERWORTH, CAMPBELL SAID THE LATEST DISCUSSION ABOUT ITS FUTURE TOOK PLACE DURING TUN ISMAIL' S VISIT IN MARCH. HE SAID ISMAIL HAD STATED IN PRIVATE TO AUSTRALIAN MINISTERS APPROXIMATELY WHAT HE AFTERWARD SAID IN PUBLIC ABOUT OVERCROWDING AT BUTTERWORTH BEGINNING IN 1976. CAMPBELL OPINED THAT ISMAIL IS NOT A MILITARY EXPERT BUT THAT HE DOES HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CIVIL AVIATION IN THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT AND MAY HAVE CONFUSED THE PROJECTED SITUATION AT BUTTERWORTH WITH PENANG AIRFIELD. CAMPBELL NOTED THAT SOME COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT CARRYING TOURISTS ARE BEING ALLOWED TO USE BUTTERWORTH BECAUSE THE PENANG AIR STRIP IS TOO SHORT FOR THEM. IN SUM, CAMPBELL NOTED THAT THE GOA HAS NOT YET FIGURED OUT WHAT ISMAIL MEANT ABOUT THE RAAF SQUADRON, BUT HOPES TO FIND OUT WHEN BARNARD VISITS.

6. CAMPBELL CONCLUDED BY ASKING IF WE COULD INFORM HIM ABOUT HOW THE INFORMATION CAME TO THE DEPARTMENT. HE SAID THERE WAS NO INTENTION OF NOT KEEPING THE USG INFORMED ABOUT DECISIONS REGARDING ANZUK SINCE THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED THE U. S. INTEREST. HE SAID THAT IF THE INFORMATION HAD COME FROM THE BRITISH, THAT AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS WERE LIKELY TO BE HIGHLY AGITATED. CAMPBELL STRESSED THAT THE GOA UNDERSTOOD THE BRITISH POSITION WITH REGARD TO ANZUK. THEY SIMPLY DID NOT SHARE THE SAME CONCERNS AS HMG. EMBOFF TOOK CAMPBELL' S REQUEST AD REFERENDUM AND SAID EMBASSY WOULD LET HIM KNOW.
RICE

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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